

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
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TO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY

INFO AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 015761

E.O. 11652: XGDS (1)

TAGS: PDIP, EFIN, PINT, PK

SUBJECT: PAKISTAN AMBASSADOR YAQUB KHAN'S CALL ON ACTING
ASSISTANT SECRETARY SOBER, JANUARY 19, 1978

SUMMARY: AMBASSADOR CALLED ON SOBER TO REQUEST US SUPPORT
FOR CANDIDACY OF MAHBUB-UL-HAQ AS UN DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR
DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION. SOBER
IN RESPONSE SAID US WOULD LOOK AT HIS CANDIDACY CAREFULLY
AND SYMPATHETICALLY BUT ALSO WANTED TO SEE WHO OTHER
CANDIDATES ARE. QUESTION OF DEBT RESCHEDULING, STATEMENT
REGARDING H BOMB BY INDIAN PARLIAMENT MEMBER, INTERNAL
PAK POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS AND PROVISION OF 2 NUCLEAR FUEL
RODS TO SMALL ISLAMABAD REACTOR WERE ALSO DISCUSSED.

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1. CANDIDACY OF MAHBUB-UL-HAQ

AMBASSADOR ACCOMPANIED BY MINISTER HAYAT MEHDI CALLED ON
SOBER AFTERNOON OF JANUARY 19. HORNBLLOW (NEA/PAB) ALSO SAT
IN.

YAQUB KHAN SAID PAK GOVERNMENT HAD DECIDED TO PROPOSE

CANDIDACY OF MAHBUB-UL-HAQ TO NEWLY CREATED POST OF UN
DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC

COOPERATION. AMBASSADOR NOTED THAT HIS BACKGROUND WAS WELL KNOWN TO US AND THAT EMBASSY HAD SENT DEPARTMENT AIDE MEMOIRE ON SUBJECT TWO DAYS AGO. AMBASSADOR SAID HE HAD BEEN INSTRUCTED TO PRESENT HIS GOVERNMENT'S HOPE THAT US COULD SUPPORT A MAN OF HIS STANDING AND STATURE FOR THIS IMPORTANT JOB.

SOBER RESPONDED THAT WE HELD HAQ IN HIGH REGARD AND BELIEVED HIM TO BE HIGHLY QUALIFIED. WE WOULD TAKE NOTE OF HIS CANDIDACY AND WOULD GIVE IT CAREFUL AND SYMPATHETIC CONSIDERATION. SOBER SAID US WOULD OF COURSE HAVE TO SEE WHO OTHER CANDIDATES ARE AND UNDERTOOK TO ADVISE AMBASSADOR WHEN A DECISION IS MADE.

2. DEBT RESCHEDULING

AMBASSADOR EMPHASIZED HE WAS NOT INSTRUCTED RAISE ISSUE BUT HAD SOME PERSONAL MISGIVINGS AND ANXIETIES ON SUBJECT. HE NOTED THAT QUESTION HAD BEEN DISCUSSED IN PARIS AND WITH SECRETARY RECENTLY YET THE "ECHOS" OF PAST MISPERCEPTION AND ANXIETIES CONTINUE TO PERSIST. AMBASSADOR SAID HE FELT STATE DEPARTMENT WOULD SUPPORT DEBT RESCHEDULING BUT PERHAPS OTHER AGENCIES SUCH AS TREASURY, AID

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AND OMB WOULD BE OPPOSED.

SOBER IN RESPONSE SUGGESTED IT MIGHT BE USEFUL TO REVIEW HIS (SOBER'S) UNDERSTANDING OF US GOVERNMENT POSITION REGARDING DEBT RESCHEDULING IN GENERAL AND THEN PARTICULAR QUESTION OF DEBT RESCHEDULING FOR PAKISTAN. SOBER SAID THAT OUR GENERAL POLICY IS NOT TO LOOK ON DEBT RESCHEDULING AS ANOTHER NORMAL FORM OF GOVERNMENTAL ASSISTANCE. WE SEE IT AS EXCEPTIONAL INSTRUMENT TO USE WHEN JUSTIFIED BY EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES. SOBER EMPHASIZED THAT WE LOOKED ON GOP'S REQUEST IN THAT GENERAL CONTEXT AND THAT WE WERE DEFINITELY NOT DISCRIMINATING AGAINST PAKISTAN.

MEHDI ASKED THAT QUESTION OF DEBT RESCHEDULING NOT ENTER INTO PENDING DECISION ON WHETHER TO APPROVE CCC CREDIT FOR 150,000 TONS OF WHEAT. MEHDI SAID PAK GOVERNMENT HAD ASSURED AMBASSADOR HUMMEL IT WOULD NOT ASK FOR DEBT RESCHEDULING FOR THE CCC PURCHASE. SOBER SAID HE WOULD LOOK INTO THIS QUESTION.

3. AMBASSADOR SAID THERE HAD BEEN SOME CONCERN IN

ISLAMABAD OVER PRESS STATEMENT BY DR. SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY AN INDIAN MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT. YAQUB KHAN SAID TH WAMY STATED THERE WOULD BE NO LET UP IN INDIAN NUCLEAR PROGRAM AND INDIA NOW AT POINT WHERE IT COULD DEVELOP A HYDROGEN BOMB. AMBASSADOR NOTED THAT PAK OFFICIALS PAY CAREFUL ATTENTION TO INDIAN STATEMENTS ON THIS SUBJECT ESPECIALLY WHEN THEY COME FROM A MEMBER OF THE RULING PARTY.

SOBER SAID THIS WAS FIRST HE HAD HEARD OF THIS STATEMENT AND HOPED THERE WASN'T ANYTHING TO IT.

MEHDI SAID THAT SWAMY IS MEMBER OF JAN SANGH AND PAKS ARE PAYING CAREFUL ATTENTION TO STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS OF THIS GROUP. MEHDI ADDED THAT JAN SANGH'S STAR ON RISE
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AND HE BELIEVES THEY MAY HAVE PREDOMINANT ROLE IN GOP IN ABOUT FIVE YEARS.

4. IN FURTHER EXCHANGE, YAQUB SAID:

-- A NUMBER OF GOP PRESIDENTIAL ADVISORS HAD RECENTLY BEEN APPOINTED.

-- THERE WAS NO CLEAR INDICATION AS TO THE TIMING OF THE ELECTION. ZIA HAD SPOKEN IN TERMS OF MONTHS AND NOT YEARS AND ELECTION WOULD PROBABLY BE HELD THIS YEAR.

-- WALI KHAN HAS SAID GOVERNMENT MUST DEAL WITH BHUTTOISM - MEANING THE WHOLE CULT SURROUNDING BHUTTO.

-- WALI KHAN HAS JOINED THE NDP AND HAS STARTED A CAMPAIGN TO VINDICATE HIMSELF. HE IS NOW MAKING POLITICAL HEADWAY IN THE PUNJAB, ALREADY HAVING STRONG SUPPORT IN THE NWFP AND BALUCHISTAN. BEYOND A DOUBT HE WILL BE OPERATING FROM A STRONG BASE. HE REALIZES HOWEVER THAT THIS WILL TAKE TIME AND HE DOES NOT WANT TO HUSTLE THE ELECTION PROCESS.

-- IF WALI KHAN CAN APPEAR AS A NATIONAL FIGURE RATHER THAN A PAROCHIAL FIGURE, HE COULD BECOME AN IMPORTANT FACTOR.

-- GENERAL ZIA IS DETERMINED TO DISENGAGE FROM POWER. THERE IS NO INDICATION HE HAS FURTHER POLITICAL AMBITIONS. IT IS NOT IN HIS CHARACTER, MAKE-UP OR PERSONALITY.

5. NUCLEAR FUEL RODS

AT END OF MEETING MEHDI SAID THERE WAS ONE LAST SUBJECT THEY WANTED TO
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RAISE. HE SAID THAT THERE WAS A SMALL NUCLEAR REACTOR (PINSTECH) OUTSIDE OF ISLAMABAD. US HAD ALREADY PROVIDED 28 OF 30 FUEL RODS NEEDED AND GOP HOPED US WOULD PROVIDE THE REMAINING TWO. AMBASSADOR NOTED THAT HE HAD RAISED THE MATTER SEVERAL MONTHS AGO AND HAD RECEIVED NO REPLY. AMBASSADOR SAID THIS QUESTION OF THE TWO FUEL RODS SHOULD BE DELINKED FROM CURRENT PROBLEM. SOBER UNDERTOOK TO LOOK INTO MATTER.

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